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Set in the largest body of water in the world, the Pacific Islands are surrounded by an astonishing 63.8 million square miles of water. The Pacific Islands are composed of the State of Hawai'i, the territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Among the most remote and pristine of these islands, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands include dozens of tiny islands, atolls, and shoals and are spread over more than 1,200 miles in the Pacific Ocean. Various forces over thousands of years have shaped the landscape of the Pacific Ocean, which contains more islands and reefs than all the other oceans and seas combined - an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 - as well as the deepest trench in the world.

Nearly the entire rim of the Pacific Ocean basin is ringed with volcanoes and earthquake areas, which have helped to develop islands and coral reefs that provide an incredibly diverse array of habitat types for many species. Island habitats include rocky cliffs, rivers, wetlands, and mountain forests. Coral reef habitats form around these islands when free-swimming coral larvae attach to the submerged edges of islands. Developed coral reefs provide a dazzling underwater landscape that hosts many types of species, including fish and sea turtles.⁷ Together, this array of habitats, from underwater coral reefs, to sandy, low lying beaches and mountain rainforests, is home to a list of species as varied as the landscapes they inhabit.

Species that call these habitats home include birds such as shearwaters, petrels, and boobies, as well as fish such as sharks, bony fish, and rays.

Downloads

- [Case Study: Pacific Islands](#)
- [Activity 1 - Impact of Climate Change on Hawaiiin Monk Seals: Mapping Deep-Sea Habits](#)
- [Activity 2 - Impact of Climate Change on Hawaiiin Monk Seals: The Odd Couple](#)
- [Activity 3 - Impact of Climate Change on Hawaiiin Monk Seals: Seals, Corals and Dollars](#)